



To Potential Applicants

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I am pleased to announce the launch of the Call for Proposals of the Workplace Skills Initiative (WSI). The WSI, as a new funding initiative, is an important component of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's new Workplace Skills Strategy. A major objective of the WSI is to fund pilot projects which respond to a range of skills-related challenges in Canadian workplaces, thereby improving our productivity and positioning us to effectively compete in the global knowledge-based economy (KBE).

The need for new models of skills development for the employed, particularly in the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector, is significant because skills gaps are becoming more and more evident as the workforce ages, as technology solutions proliferate, as skills levels increase and as lifelong learning becomes an imperative. Attempts to close these gaps using established models of skills development, for example: classroom, conferences, mentoring, often fall short because knowledge-based skills levels continue to evolve and demand a more holistic approach.

For Canadians to maintain sustained economic growth and prosperity, workplace partners need to continuously experiment with new approaches, ones that test and evaluate innovative, outcome-focused approaches to skills development for employed Canadians. The WSI is designed to help pilot innovative models that will mobilize and transform Canadian workplaces to meet both present and future challenges.

Enclosed is the first WSI Call for Proposals package for your consideration.

I invite you to consider submitting pilot project proposals during the 2005 Call for Proposals to help Canadians meet the challenges of skills imperatives and ensure our success now and in the future.

Dave Thornton, Ph.D.
WSI Program Director